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Agri-News

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TENNESSEE FARMERS REVEAL INTENTIONS FOR 2003

Tennessee farmers revealed their planting intentions for the 2003 crop season during a recent survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service. According to survey results, producers intentions as of March 1 are to plant more corn and cotton and less soybeans and burley tobacco. Sorghum acreage is expected to remain steady, while hay acres are projected to decline. Winter wheat acreage seeded last fall to be harvested in 2003 is also expected to be less than a year earlier. State Statistician Debra Kenerson added that, "These results reflect producers intentions as of March 1 and could change, as weather conditions and other factors dictate." Major crop acreages and expected changes from last year are as follows: **Soybeans**, 1.10 million acres, down 5 percent; **Corn**, 740,000 acres, up 7 percent; **Cotton**, 600,000 acres, up 5 percent; **Burley tobacco**, 28,000 acres, down 7 percent; and **Hay**, 1.95 million acres, down 4 percent.

SOYBEAN ACREAGE TO DECLINE FOR 2003

Soybean acreage, at 1.10 million, is expected to be down 5 percent from a year ago, but up 3 percent from 2001. This level has been typical in Tennessee the past 10 years as soybean producers have been planting a fairly consistent amount of acreage, increasing only if sharp price changes occur or weather conditions prevent corn or cotton plantings. Producers comments indicate that the decrease for 2003 is due mainly to no apparent price advantage to soybeans over other crops and normal crop rotation.

LARGEST CORN ACREAGE IN SEVEN YEARS; SORGHUM UNCHANGED

Corn acreage is forecast at 740,000, up 7 percent from 2002 and the highest level since 1996. The 50,000 acre increase is due in part to some growers shifting from soybeans to corn, as well as acreage that was intended last year but not planted due to persistent precipitation. The 2003 sorghum forecast is 35,000 acres, unchanged from the previous year. Field preparations are underway and farmers are optimistic about planting their corn and sorghum crops on time. A few acres of corn have already been planted, but most of Tennessee's corn and sorghum acreage is planted during April and May.

COTTON ACREAGE ON THE RISE

Planted acreage is forecast at 600,000 acres in 2003, up 30,000 acres from 2002. Tennessee cotton acreage will increase this year due to its favorable demand relative to other crops and many established growers intending to plant more than usual. Field preparations have begun in most areas, although planting does not normally begin until early May.

(OVER)

LOWEST BURLEY ACREAGE IN 76 YEARS

The State’s burley tobacco area for harvest in 2003 is forecast at 28,000 acres, down 7 percent from the previous year and the lowest level since 1927. The decline in acreage is predicted due to the reduction in quota and high lease rates. Escalating labor cost and availability will also likely contribute to the decrease. The other tobacco types grown in Tennessee all showed increases in potential acreage for the 2003 planting season. Type 22 - Eastern Dark-Fired, acreage is forecast at 5,100 acres, up 100 acres from a year ago; Type 23 - Western Dark-Fired, is forecast at 410 acres, up 10 acres from 2002; Type 35 - Dark Air-Cured, is forecasted at 530 acres, up 30 acres from last year.

WHEAT SEEDINGS THE LOWEST SINCE 1992

Winter wheat seedings for the 2003 season totaled 450,000 acres, 10,000 acres less than the December forecast and 20,000 acres less than last year. This is the lowest recorded acreage in 11 years when 410,000 acres were sown. Planting of the 2003 crop was underway by the first week in October; however, by mid-month producers struggled to wrap up fall seeding as wet weather limited most field activities. Development of the crop has progressed slightly behind the normal pace with reports of armyworms seen in some areas. Wet weather the end of February and first of March forced growers to await drier conditions to finish applying top-dressing. Currently, the crop is rated in mostly good condition.

HAY ACREAGE TO DECREASE FROM A YEAR AGO

Tennessee hay producers intend to harvest an estimated 1.95 million acres, down 4 percent from a year ago. Hay supplies were adequate going into the winter months, but adverse weather conditions during January and February has resulted in more hay consumption than normal. Producers experienced a wide range of difficulties during 2002, as they struggled with excess rainfall to drought conditions throughout the harvest season. Currently, hay stocks are short in some areas, but mild conditions during March have helped promote pasture growth.

Planting Intentions: Tennessee and United States, March 1, 2003, with Comparisons				
Crop	2001	2002	Intended 2003 ¹	2003/2002
Tennessee	1,000 Acres			Percent
Corn	680	690	740	107
Sorghum	30	35	35	100
Winter wheat	500	470	450	96
Soybeans	1,070	1,160	1,100	95
Cotton, all	620	570	600	105
Tobacco, all ²	39.69	35.90	34.04	95
E. Dark-fired (22)	6.50	5.00	5.10	102
W. Dark-fired (23)	0.52	0.40	0.41	103
Burley (31)	32.00	30.00	28.00	93
One-sucker (35)	0.67	0.50	0.53	106
Hay ²	2,135	2,030	1,950	96
United States				
Corn	75,752	79,054	79,022	100
Sorghum	10,252	9,580	9,451	99
Winter wheat	41,078	41,735	44,308	106
Soybeans	74,075	73,758	73,182	99
Cotton, all	15,768.5	13,962.6	14,253.0	102
Tobacco, all ²	432.34	430.28	417.51	97
E. Dark-fired (22)	9.80	7.50	7.70	103
W. Dark-fired (23)	3.62	2.80	2.81	100
Burley (31)	164.30	159.60	151.10	95
One-sucker (35)	3.42	2.60	2.73	105
Hay ²	63,521	64,497	63,552	99

¹ Intended planting for 2003. ² Acres harvested.